The ſtrange and cruell martyrdome of an Engliſh man in the Towne of Dunkerke this preſent moneth of Ianuarie. 1591.

With the manner of his torments, and his great patience at his death, which hee ſuffered for the profeſſion of the Goſpell of Chriſt Ieſus.

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The cruell martyrdome of an *Englishman in Dunkerke.*

THE tyrannous and grieuous torments which the enemies to the Gospell of Christ Jesus, haue many waies inflicted vppon the true professours thereof, are strange and terrible, yea and such as all Christian hearts are grieued to heare, the reportes whereof flieth farre, and memorie hath made manifest in the life and death of martyrs. Among all which there hath not ben the like heard or read of, as this Thomas Williams indured in the town of Dunkerke (a place of greate crueltie towards Englishmen) where the Lord is greatly dishonored, and his members grieuously persecuted, as by the sequele you shall manifestlie perceiue.

There was one Thomas Williams a Ken-

tish man borne, in the Parish of Strood, fiue miles from Graueſend, where his father beeing a farmer and a man of good account now liueth, called John Williams. Not long ſince, this Thomas Williams beeing deſirous to trauaile into the lowe Countries, got his fathers good will that he might go ouer to Roterdam, where to ſpend the time of his abode hee ſerued in the ſtate of a ſouldier. From whence trauelling vppon ſome occaſion towards Dunkerke, he was ſodenly taken and brought to the towne, and for that hee was knowen to be an Engliſhman, he was preſently committed to priſon, where hauing remayned three daies, he was broght before the gouernour, and ſtraightly examined what hee was, and to what end he came ouer: Whereto he directly aunſwered. Then they examined him touching his beleefe and other deep points in religion. To the which hee anſwered them verie mildly, that hee beleeued in God, who created him, and in Chriſt Jeſus who redeemed him, and that by him hee was aſſured to haue euerlaſting life. Then they demanded what he thought concerning the holy ſaints, their images, and other holy reliques which they haue in their Churches. Whereto he anſwered, that he could ſaie little, for that he neuer ſawe them. Whereupon he was conuaied to the Church, and ſtraightly charged to wor-

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ship and fall downe before them, which in any wise he would not do, but in defiance of them, and to proue that they were but Idolles, hee stepped to their wooden God & violently rent awaie one of his armes, and therewithal declared vnto them, that he was commanded by the word of God to worshippe none but the liuing God, & forasmuch as he sawe that their God was made with mens hands of stones and blockes, he would not honour it at all, for in so doing he shoulde giue him that which is proper to none but to God.

Heere withall the cruell Officers ouercome with ire, commaied him backe againe to prison, where he remained two daies, & from thence was brought to the place of iudgment before the gouernour, called the grand seignior Deuean, and straightly examined againe for his great outrage committed against their God. Where after many high wordes, cruell threateninges, and bitter speeches, they promised to inflicte him with most grieuous punishments vnlesse hee recanted and abiured his heretical opinions, which hee vtterly denied, stedfastly beleuing in the true faith of Iesus Christ, warranted vnto him in his word: whereupon the said Thomas Williams was forthwith condemned in this manner: first to haue his hands burned of close by the wrists, his feete to be also burned off by the anckles,

and after that his bodie to be burned vntill it were consumed to ashes, which was performed with all extremitie: neuertheles he was no whit dismaied thereat, but had as cheerefull a countenance as anie man might, saying that he rather desired to die in Christs cause, than to liue and bee beloued of those who are the knowen enimies of Christ his truth, adding thereto, that whosoeuer denieth Christ before men, he will denie them before his father which in is heauen. Thus was he cõuaied to prison, and on the morrow after brought forth by souldiers into the market place, before the gouernour of the sayd Towne, where a scaffolde was ready prepared for his execution, and a great Lampe lighted wherewith to burne off his right hand, which was prolonged by taking the hande from the fire, and putting it too again, foure hours by the clock, beginning first at the fingers, then to the thumbe, and after to the whole hand. Thus his right hand beeing burnt off, hee was demanded whether he would recant or not, but he answered, that the more extreamely they vsed him, the lesse paine he felt through Gods assistance, which wordes caused some of the beholders to thinke, that he felt but little pain, by reason hee looked with a most cheerefull countenance, then was he carried back again to prison, and the next daie hee was brought

forth

fourth, and in the same manner had his left hand also burned off. On ỹ third daie a chaire was fired on the stage, and the said Thomas Williams brought thether again and set on ỹ same, where one of his feet was burned with the Lampe, & then carried to prison betweene two souldiers. On the fourth and last daie he was brought againe to the same place, where seeing many Englishmen to bee his persecutors, who perswaded him to recant, promising him great maintenance: he replied, that they were vngodly persons, traitors and faithles both to their Prince and Countrie: Oh (sayd he) my faithlesse Countrie men, you that so greedily haue sought after my death, and procured this my extreame torture (to your seeming) and yet to me more sweete than life, you that dailie rob God of his honour, remember howe wickedlie you haue dealt with many of your Countrie men, I wish you to repent your wickednes, and forsake your idolatrous waies, for God will seuerely punish you and yours for the same. And as hee was speaking further, hee was interrupted, and thereupon his toes were put into the flame, and his foote in foure houres space burned cleane off. Whereupon being readie to be returned back againe to prison, an English captaine hauing charged a dagge with a bullet and white pouder, sodainly discharged it,

and shot him through the heart, so that hee fell downe dead, closing the stumps of his armes together, in signe that hee trusted in Christe Jesus. And thus by this meanes hee was released from the torments which lastly should haue beene inflicted vpon him. Whereby it seemeth this Englishman was greeued in conscience to see the extreame torments, which hee most patiently endured. After which the sayd Captaine Reade, being a Kentish man borne, caused him to be buried in the Churchyard, & the next daie after released seauen Englishmen out of prison, foure whereof went into France, & the other three are lately returned into England.

FINIS.